



The INKSLINGER

HIGH DESERT BRANCH CWC
Inspiring a Community of Writers

Sail On

June 2021

Club Meetings for June

Saturday June 12th 10:00 AM

Maggie Downs

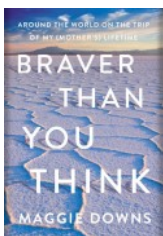
Maggie Downs is an award-winning writer based in Palm Springs, California, and the author of *Braver Than You Think: Around the World on the Trip of My (Mother's) Lifetime* (Counterpoint Press, 2020). Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Palm Springs Life*, and *McSweeney's*, among others, and her essays have been anthologized in *The Lonely Planet Travel Anthology: True Stories from the World's Best Writers* and *Best Women's Travel Writing*.



Writing a Memorable Memoir

This discussion will focus on the structure of memoirs and how to write a book or essay that isn't simply a retelling of events but something rebirthed into art. This is what makes Cheryl Strayed's *Wild* a riveting literary narrative and not merely a diary of 94 days on a hike.

We're not reading for the trail, we're reading for what Strayed has done with it. Ms. Downs will offer examples of different approaches to structure and show you some tricks for finding the one that works best for your story.



Tuesday June 22th 6:00 PM

Giving a Presentation? 7 Things You Need to Do to Get Ready



Whether a published author or not, there are 7 things you need to do to get ready to publicize yourself and your present or future book.

Bob Isbill has occupied the position of Programs Chair for the HDCWC almost continuously for over ten years and produced 7 Howl at the Moon Writers Conferences. In that capacity,

he has arranged for dozens and dozens of guest speakers. According to Bob, most guest speakers are unprepared with what they need to give to their producer in a timely manner. Many do not know or realize what producers need them to provide.

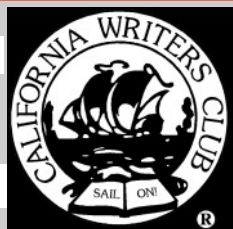
Today's writers get more mileage out of their books if they can also do presentations, appear on podcasts, and do interviews.

This HDCWC Act II Zoom program will feature Bob Isbill sharing what he has learned about "getting your book out there" and setting up a simple file of everything you need for a publicity package as a potential guest speaker.

This presentation's goal is to inform you how to get prepared to answer an invitation to do a presentation to any group and how to look like a professional before you meet your audience.

The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 6 pm. As a member of the HDCWC, you will automatically get an email with the link prior to the meeting.

High Desert branch
of
California Writers
Club
Board of Directors



*The following officers
and appointed positions are current to
the fiscal year of July 2021.*

President

Dwight Norris
hdcwcpresidentdnorris@gmail.com

Vice President

Mike Apodaca
MrDaca.ma@gmail.com

Secretary

Joan Rudder-Ward
imaker@msn.com

Treasurer

Jenny Margotta
jennymargotta@mail.com

Member-at-Large

Linda Boruff
lindajeannerboruff@msm.com

Programs / Publicity Chair

Bob Isbill
Risbill@aol.com

Membership

Michael Raff
mprseven@aol.com

Newsletter Editor (Temporary)

Mike Apodaca
Mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

Webmaster

Roberta Smith
hdcwc_web@aol.com

Quote of the Month

**By
Michael Raff**

“All literate men are sustained by the philosopher, the historian, the political analyst, the economist, the scientist, the poet, the artisan and the musician.”

Glen T. Seaborn, scientist, Nobel laureate.

**Is your author profile up to date on the MRMS?
It's time to make sure. (mprseven@aol.com)**

The High Desert Branch of the CWC is scheduled for elections of officers at its June 12, 2021 meeting.

Elections will be conducted as scheduled via a Zoom meeting on that date, and officers will be elected by those present and voting.

The slate is so far unopposed, and consists of the following:

President: Dwight Norris

Vice President: Mike Apodaca

Secretary: Joan Rudder-Ward

Treasurer: Jenny Margotta

Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please notify me by writing ristill@aol.com or by phone at 760.221.6367.

Our Address

**HDCWC
17645 Fisher Street
Victorville, CA 92395**



Dwight Norris
from the
President

ADAPTATIONS FOR WRITERS

Adaptations are part of life. That which does not adapt perishes. And that's about it. Any questions? Okay, let's develop our point a little bit.

Example. The human eye was engineered to adapt. When the light in our environs is bright, the pupil sends a message to the brain and narrows, letting in less light because too much brightness is not optimal. When the light is dim, the pupil opens up and lets in more light because it is needed for optimal functioning. A simple example of a useful adaptation that helps our bodies function better, regardless of conditions.

All species of animals adapt to survive. Some develop proper color to provide camouflage and prevent them from becoming easy prey. Others develop camouflage capabilities to become an effective predator. I'm thinking about some types of fish in the ocean that live on a reef and look like a rock, but when the unsuspecting fish swims by—gulp! He has become the evening meal.

There are different types of adaptations, not just physiological or biological, as we have already mentioned. How about the reality and necessity of socio-economic change? With all the adjustments we have experienced in our lifetimes, I have often wondered how our friends and relatives felt at the turn of the nineteenth century. That would be the late 1800s moving into the 1900s.

Let's think about this to get some perspective. The Civil War ended in 1865. I graduated high school in 1965. I thought about that one day. Wow! Just a hundred years since the end of the Civil War. Historically, barely the blink of an eye! As late as the 1880s, we were still a horse and buggy society. Now in 1965, we've got hot rods and muscle cars!

Imagine a family who was deeply entrenched in the horse and buggy economy. Maybe they raised horses. Perhaps they manufactured all sorts of products and gear that involved horses—saddles, bridles, horseshoes, buggies, buggy whips, brushes. Their business interests and wealth are well-established. And along comes Henry Ford. What do you mean, *Industrial Revolution*? *Internal combustion engine*? What are you talking about?

Does that family resist or adapt? If they want to continue to thrive, it might be wise to check things out, embrace the change and adapt!

What does that mean for us today? We are a writers club—an active writing community. We have a strong interest in writing. If we didn't, we wouldn't have joined the club. We have something to offer, something to say, some influence to impart, some difference to make. But how do we get the word out?

The writer's world has changed, as all worlds do. Gone are the days when the following conversation is likely to be heard.

"Mr. Norris, we think you're a wonderful writer," says the agent at Megabucks Publishing. "We feel very fortunate to have found you. And to show our appreciation, we're going to give you a million dollar signing bonus and another million dollars as an advance on commissions. Don't worry about the marketing on your book. We'll take care of everything. So, just sign here, pick up your checks, and we'll be in touch."

Not likely to happen that way today. If that's what you're waiting for, be prepared to wait a long time. Now as I'm writing these words, I'm writing them to myself as well. I need the message in this article as much as anyone in the club.



Continued next page



Dwight Norris
from the
President

ADAPTATIONS FOR WRITERS (continued)

On April 10th of this year, we had an expert writer talk to us via a Zoom meeting about how to make a living as a writer. I'm speaking about James Scott Bell. He lives the life of a successful writer and continues to do what he recommended for us. The following is some of what he had to say.

He said if you're going to make your living as a professional writer, you must know you are in the publishing business. You will either go with a traditional publisher or become an independent publisher. You must target your market so you can sell your product. If your product is a book and you are an indy publisher, you must concern yourself with the details of production to include editing, cover design, formatting, book description—the list is long. All of this becomes part of your business.

James talked about five writer disciplines. One, a quota. Systematically set your life up to write consistently a certain number of words per week. It's better to set a weekly quota rather than daily because days can vary, but you can recover over a week. James currently has a goal of six thousand words in a week. For some, that's more than they could realistically do. Whatever your quota is, try to be consistent. You can add to it later.

I heard an interview one time with Louis L'Amour, the famed Western writer, and he said you can only write when you're in the mood. Then he added. "And I make damn well sure I'm in the mood about eight hours a day!"

Another must is craft study. Systematically work on improving your writing by studying and practicing writing. There are many self-help writing books out there that will help us become better writers. James Scott Bell has written a lot of them.

We also must have a system for feedback on our writing. Consult with editors and beta readers that we respect. Critique groups also help a lot to get the perspective of other serious writing professionals. Be skeptical about the feedback you get from your mother and your best friend.



James says that honesty is another discipline a professional writer must have. Don't be delusional and kid yourself, but honestly assess your consistency and your efforts in all aspects of your career.

And finally, James says to persevere. Keep going. Rinse and repeat, as the commercial states. If you do, the time period of a year should show a lot of growth and progress.

Perhaps it's time some of us hit the reset button in our writing efforts. If we want to write for fun and as a hobby, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Enjoy! You can gain a lot of fulfillment that way. But if we want to actually make a living as a writer, we must set some specific goals and develop and consistently apply the professional practices James Scott Bell has taught us about.

One more thing. Don't forget that our local writers club (HDCWC) is a supportive writing community. We're all rooting for one another's success. A lot of areas of expertise are represented in our ranks. And if we can't find it, someone among us can point us in the right direction. So don't try to be the Lone Ranger. Offer help to others when you can, and receive it when it is offered to you. In this club, we are in a good place!



Mike Apodaca

**from the
Vice President**

1000 Hesperian Nights



The story goes that the wife of the Persian king, Shahryar, was unfaithful. He was so crushed that he married a new virgin every day and had her beheaded the next morning before she could dishonor him. After his vizier had provided him with all the beautiful noble women in the kingdom, the vizier's own daughter volunteered. On the night of her death, Scheherazade told the king a long story but stopped at the climax. The king was so curious he let the condemned woman live another day. That day, Scheherazade finished the first story and told half of another. This pattern continued until, over a period of years, the tale weaver had spun a thousand stories. The king, who had fallen in love with her, pardoned her and made her his queen.

Ever wonder where Scheherazade got all those stories? Where do prolific writers like John Steinbeck, Steven King, Dean Koontz, Nora Roberts, Michael Crichton, etc. get their ideas?

Scheherazade was an avid reader and student of history as are most writers. She had a collection of over a thousand books. Being literate is the first step to being a storyteller.

Another factor is keeping our eyes open. I'm writing this in an airline boarding area waiting for my flight. I have about an hour. Just now, a small House Sparrow landed on the floor not five feet away from me. It hopped around a little on its pretzel-twig legs, then darted away. There's a story there. Now, the bird itself showing up is not an entire story, but it's unusual enough to be a part of a good tale. Perhaps it'll be a children's story and the bird will be the protagonist. Maybe she's lost. Maybe she never learned to fly and decided to come to the airport to learn how. Or it could be a story where a person was turned into a bird. Maybe it's a mystery and the bird distracts a scientist while a mysterious person steals the bag carrying the antidote for a poison that's been given to the president. The clock is ticking. We see the bird in the first scene and then it's gone.

And so it goes with storytelling. We might start with a premise and then move on to develop interesting characters and a world for them to inhabit, keeping our eye on the theme we want to share. I like the way Michael Raff does this. Or we might bring up a memory, embellish it a little to add story-telling pizzazz. This is what Jenny Margotta does so well. Or we might tell a person's story, trying to show key moments where they overcame difficulties and showed their character. This is Dwight Norris' strength. Personally, I like to think of weird situations in life and what would happen if things kept moving forward in that strange direction.

My point is, there are stories in our lives right now. When we put together our life's worth of learning, our memories, our imagination, and the weird things that just happen, we all have at least a thousand stories to share. I remember Steven Spielberg once complaining that there were too many good stories to tell them all in a lifetime.

The key to writing: Keep your eyes open. Ask yourself often, "Is there a story here?" or "Is there something I can use in a story?" Maybe write down your many ideas and crazy experiences. Talk to friends and family—they all have lots of stories.

I'm at the airport because I came to Oklahoma to visit my 82-year-old mother who recently had her leg amputated. My mom and her husband, Joe, had dropped me off at the airport. They had a long drive back home in rainy weather. My phone just rang. When I answered, I heard my mom's faint voice calling my name, then static. The call dropped. I stood, my heart racing, and called back several times, but the calls didn't go through. Bet you want to know what happened next.



Jenny Margotta

from an

EDITOR'S DESK

Apostrophe Protection Society

One of my East Coast authors recently sent me a link to an article he thought I'd enjoy. He was right! I'm so glad to know I'm not the only person who occasionally obsesses about punctuation. I generally fixate on the usage of commas, but I spot punctuation misuse everywhere.

The headline for the article I was sent read: **"John Richards, bulwark for the apostrophe against grammatical 'barbarians,' dies at 97."**

John Belton Richards—born in London on September 17, 1923—was a British journalist who founded the Apostrophe Protection Society, a "self-styled bulwark against the 'barbarians' laying waste to a humble yet essential element of the English language." He passed away in March 2021 in England.

Mr. Richards spent 35 years as a journalist but also worked as a copy editor. Finally, "fed up with correcting reporters' copy," he "decided to do something about a . . . vexing category of error." In 2001 he founded the Apostrophe Protection Society to protect a "poor defenseless creature" whose existence was "in danger as technology increasingly encouraged speed over grammatical precision" and "the English-speaking population descended into a disgraceful form of semi-literacy."

There are several proper uses for apostrophes. Apostrophes indicate possession—Tom's life's goal—and they indicate missing letters in contractions—couldn't, haven't, won't, rock 'n' roll. However, an apostrophe is *never* used to indicate the plural form of a singular noun. You've all seen something like, "The 1970's were a great time to be alive." It's 1970s, no apostrophe. You are simply indicating the years 1970 through 1979; there's nothing possessive about it, nor are there any letters or numbers missing.

Mr. Richards and other society members even went to far as to take photos of "apostrophe abuse" and post them on their website. Some examples included "Diamond's Are Forever," "Lot's More Toy's Inside," and a newsstand where readers could find "New's and Magazines."

But Mr. Richards' particular favorite was "Tattoo's." Not a great statement for a business whose primary purpose was to permanently ink a customer's skin. The society also called attention to the absence of the apostrophe, such as "St. Pauls Square" rather than "St. Paul's Square" and "Waterstones Bookshop" rather than "Waterstone's Bookshop."

For a time, an unknown vigilante even roamed at night, correcting erroneous signs with a pen or black paint. Mr. Richards, however, advocated sending letters that read, in part, "'Dear Sir or Madam, because there seems to be some doubt about the use of the apostrophe, we are taking the liberty of drawing your attention to an incorrect use. We . . . do not intend any criticism but are just reminding you of correct usage should you wish to put right the mistake.'"

Detractors argued that the apostrophe didn't matter that much and that, for the most part, what is written is understood by its context without the apostrophe. By comparison, they argued, the comma or the colon is much more important. One example given was: "A woman, without her man, is nothing," or, depending on the comma and colon, "A woman: without her, man is nothing."

Undeterred, Mr. Richards gave the example of a sign outside an apartment building that read: "Residents' refuse to be placed in bins." You get an entirely different interpretation when you eliminate the apostrophe.

Regrettably, the Apostrophe Protection Society was disbanded in 2019. Mr. Richards said that, at the age of 96, it was time to "cut back" and furthermore, "the ignorance and laziness present in modern times have won!"

Mr. Richards' efforts on behalf of the abused apostrophe did not go unnoticed. In 2001 he received the Ig Nobel Prize for literature—bestowed at Harvard University by the satirical journal, *The Annals of Improbable Research*—and in 2015 he was featured in a calendar printed by the Dull Men's Club of Britain.

In one of his last statements, Mr. Richards told of an encounter he had at a coffee shop. A sign advertised the sale of "coffee's." He very politely said, "It's not needed. It's a plural."

The owner's reply was, "I think it looks better with an apostrophe."

And what can you say to that?

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/john-richards-dead/2021/04/25/9c7c1994-a425-11eb-a774-7b47ceb36ee8_story.html

GOODYEAR GURU by Lorelei Kay

My doctor says I'm shrinking.
Alarmingly, the measuring stick agrees.
But here inside, where a lifetime of memories reside,
I'm quite the same I've been for umpteen years.

So where on this round earth, could
an inch and a half of me have disappeared?
Did particles wear away as I paced down the halls
on dark sleepless nights with babes in my arms?

Or drop off while walking my daughters to school?
Could I have lost more of me as we traipsed
through large malls in search of *the* dress
for each high school prom?

Did I wear farther down as I hiked mountain trails,
or line danced on high-polished floors?
Could increments have ground away
as I pruned and plucked red roses from

the garden patch I tend near my front door?
Perhaps if I would climb a lofty mountain top,
a Guru there would whisper in my ear,
and say, "You're One Big Ring of Tread—

like a Goodyear tire rolling through the years,
leaving parts of you, bit by bit, behind.
The farther you go, the more miles you rove,
the more of you wears thin."

If so—are there footpaths I've imprinted,
with the tread pattern called my life,
weaving through my twists and turns of days
for me to check to tell, if I am wearing well?

All I Want For Christmas

By Diane Neil

When I was decades younger, I enjoyed riding a bicycle all over the place. I never thought I'd cycle again until I saw an adult tricycle advertised in a catalog. It had a big basket, and it looked like it would be fun to ride. I use a stationery bike in the house a couple of times a week, but it's so boring.

I thought of sending for one from the catalog, but we found a great local bicycle shop -- Apple Valley Bikes -- that custom builds them specifically for riding in the desert, which is where we live. My trike is a beauty--mint green, sized for me and equipped with thorn-proof reinforced tires.

So Santa came early this year, and most mornings find me out playing on my new Sun trike.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY HDCWC MEMBERS BORN IN JUNE

June 9 Fran Savage

and June 27 Henrietta Williams

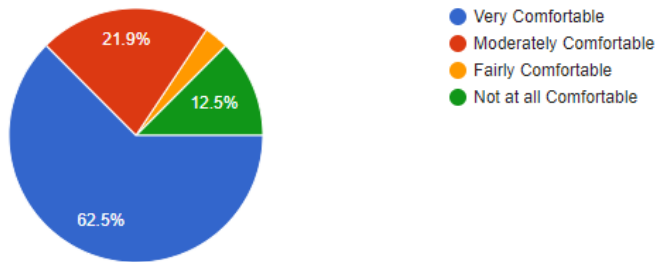
A Few Famous Authors Born in June

June 2, Thomas Hardy; June 3, Larry McMurtry; June 4, Dr. Ruth Westheimer; June 10, Maurice Sendak; June 11, Robert Munsch and Mehmet Oz; June 12, Anne Frank; June 13, William Butler Yeats; June 14, Harriet Beecher Stowe; June 16, Joyce Carol Oates; June 22, Octavia E. Butler; June 25, George Orwell; June 26, Pearl S. Buck; June 27, Helen Keller.

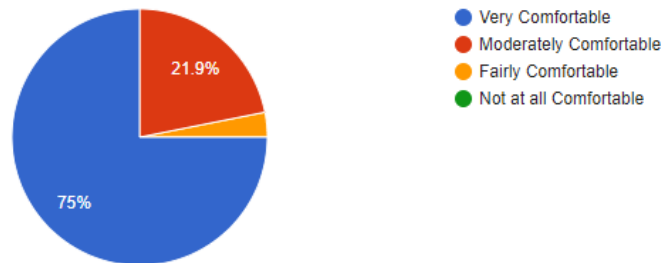
Survey Results

These are strange times. Our board is faced with many decisions regarding upcoming meetings and felt it would be best to know how the members were feeling. Here are the results:

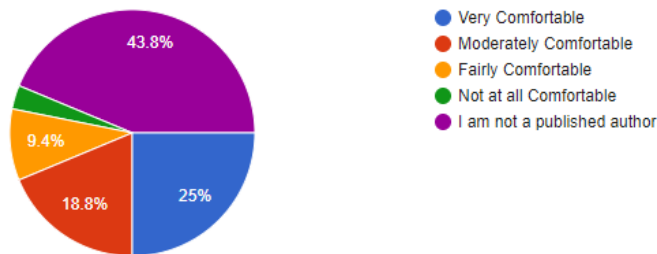
Given the Pandemic circumstances as you understand them: How comfortable are you to attend a face-to-face meeting with other HDCWC members indoors?



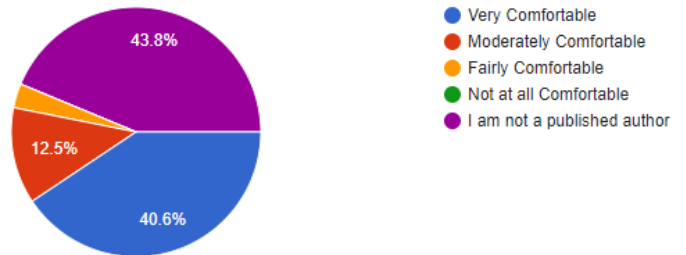
Given the Pandemic circumstances as you understand them: How comfortable are you to attend a face-to-face meeting with other HDCWC members outdoors?



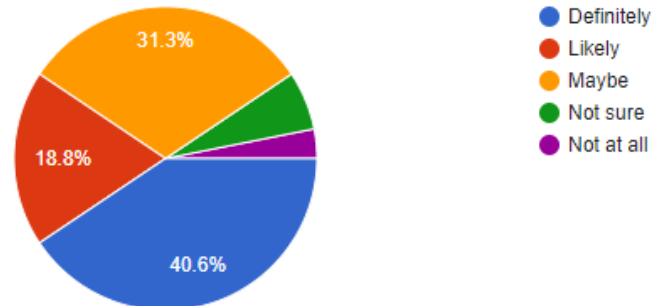
If you are a published author with books to sell, how interested would you be in participating in an indoor bookselling booth?



If you are a published author with books to sell, how interested would you be in participating in an outdoor bookselling booth?



How likely would you be to attend a book signing?



In summary, it looks like most all members are ready to get together in person again. More than 84% said they would be comfortable meeting indoors while nearly 97% said they would be comfortable outdoors.

In the same way, nearly 80% of our published authors said they would be willing to have a book sale indoors while nearly all said they would be comfortable having it outdoors.

More than half said they would likely attend a club book signing.

The biggest surprise was finding that nearly half our writers are yet to be published. This just shows how important it is to have this club to help these writers get into print.

We are hoping to return soon to some of the things we miss—things like seeing each other face-to-face.

Thanks to all who participated in this survey. It was great to hear your views.

Mike Apodaca



MISS SUNNY GARDEN SNAIL

by
fumi-tome ohta

I saw a snail today
I've seen snails before
moving like the slowest
mobile sidewalk
This one slid along
with her home on her back
a wet dot
marked where she shifted gears

and continued on
In all my little girl years
and years and decades later
a fan of snails I was not
that is, until today
This snail looked beautiful to me
she had grace
she had charm
she had a winning personality
Hello, Miss Sunny garden snail
Good morning!
Peace be with you
as you glide along
these cement trails
or trek upon each blade of
grass
bejeweled in morning dew
I won't keep you
I see you have places to be
Adieu,
Auvoir
Salud,
Until our paths cross again



Word of the Month:

Sesquipedalian [seskwəpəˈdālyən] Adjective

1. (of a word) polysyllabic; long.

Synonyms include: pompous, overblown, inflated, pretentious, grandiose, flowery

2. Characterized by long words; long-winded.

Synonyms include: lengthy, protracted, tedious, rambling

From the Latin, *sesquipedalis*, meaning "a foot and a half long." It's often used to tease someone who tends to use long, clunky words, perhaps trying to impress, when more ordinary and familiar words would do. The polysyllabic words used by these folks are also called sesquipedalian.

"Writers Accountability"

Zoom call each Wednesday
morning at 8:00 am

Discussions

Looking for weekly
accountability to . . .

Write your book

Ideas on publicity

Website book page with links

Amazon Author Page

Join us on Wednesday mornings
at 8 am

Call Barbara Parish for Zoom link
760 662-3547

ANNOUNCING MICHAEL RAFF'S LATEST ANTHOLOGY

Shadowland



Michael Raff

Take a journey into dark, sinister realms where
an abandoned mansion harbors
a ghastly secret
A demonic entity thrives on
the souls of the dead
A deranged woman protects
a murderous creature
A carnivorous bird extracts
a deadly revenge
And a three-century demonic presence
guards its treasure.

Seven stories in all

**AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.COM THIS
MONTH!**

Sell Your Books

HDCWC Announces Book Sale Booth Beginning June 16th

The High Desert Branch of the California Writers Club (HDCWC) is in the process of negotiating for space to sell your books at a location in Apple Valley beginning on Wednesday, June 16, 2021.

This opportunity, of course, is available only to those authors who feel comfortable occupying a booth (outdoors) and doing book signings with the public. We will adhere to the policies and parameters of the location with respect to wearing masks or social distancing.

The HDCWC will sponsor the activity so that the cost will be low for the authors. Participating members will pay only \$15 per event. Two authors will occupy the booth at each event.

Events will occur on Wednesday evenings from 5 pm to 9 pm, and on Sundays from 9 am to 2 pm. The events are scheduled to begin on Wednesday, June 16, 2021, through Wednesday July 21.

The location of this project is at Town's End on Highway 18 in East Apple Valley on the North side of the highway from the Apple Valley Post Office. There is an abundance of foot traffic, music, food trucks, and a variety of vendors.

We'll be signing up interested authors on June 5th, at the yard party at the home of Bob and Judy Isbill. Questions about this book booth event should be directed to Michael Raff. mrseven@aol.com

The market at Townsend is an experience unlike any other in our High Desert region. With a commitment to serve the local community, we are curating a wonderfully crafted artisan square. Not only will we feature top notch crafts and goods, we will also be host to musical entertainment of all genres in order to create the perfect ambiance.



What makes Townsend a unique experience:

Dedicated market space: not a converted parking lot or blocked off street

Dedicated parking: no need to worry about finding a spot or getting a ticket at our market!

Custom-made pre-installed market booths: easy set up and tear down for vendors, more time dedicated to selling!

Fully-fenced, secure event center unlike most markets

Booths equipped with electricity and lighting: no need for noisy generators

Dedicated facilities for your customers not shared with other businesses: restrooms, dining and seating areas not in competition with other events or business activities

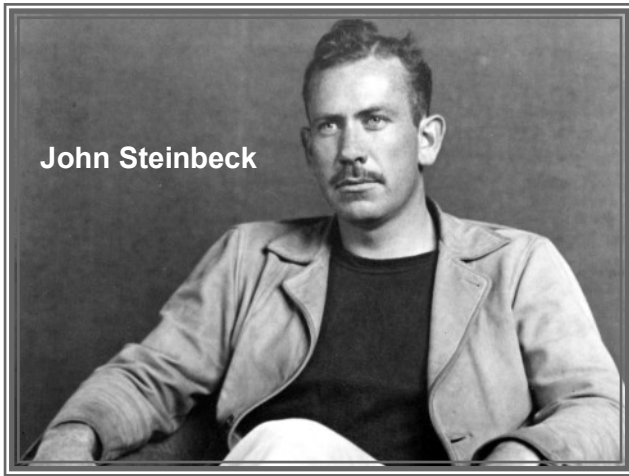
High visibility: located on frontage road of major state highway with easy access from local mountains, low desert, and high desert areas.

Distillery tasting room, retail store, and full restaurant / distillery located on TE campus to increase customer traffic.

Open Friday and Saturday 6-10 pm, Sunday 9-2 am, Wednesday 5-9 pm

The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff



John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, CA. He graduated from Salinas High School in 1919 and studied English Literature at Stanford University but left without a degree. John moved to New York, but he wasn't able to publish his work and moved back to California. His father helped him by giving John free housing, loans, and even supplying him with writing paper. John was married a total of three times. A friend, Edward Ricketts, proved to be a major influence on Steinbeck's writing and they collaborated on the book, *Sea of Cortez*. In all, Steinbeck wrote 33 books, including 16 novels, 6 non-fiction books, 2 collections of short stories and other works, which were published after his death.

Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, was about the pirate Henry Morgan and his assault on the city of Panama. Steinbeck's first critically successful novel was *Tortilla Flat*, a comedy set in Monterey. In 1937, he wrote *Of Mice and Men*, originally a play, then a novella. The plot concerns two migrant workers and Steinbeck's themes of fate, injustice, loneliness, powerlessness, moral decline of America, and the plight of the downtrodden emerged.

Published in 1939, *The Grapes of Wrath* is considered his masterpiece and won the Pulitzer Prize. Some of his other well-known books are *Cannery Row*, *The Pearl*, (novella), *East of Eden*, (his longest work and favorite), *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*, and *The Winter of Our Discontent*.

Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962 for his "realistic and imaginative writing . . . and keen social perception." He was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Lyndon Johnson. However, Steinbeck received much criticism and backlash, mostly for *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*, which were banned in schools and libraries in the Deep South and in Kern County, CA for promoting: euthanasia, racial slurs, profanity, and anti-business sentiment. Many of his books were made into movies, including: *Of Mice and Men*, *Tortilla Flat*, *Cannery Row*, and *East of Eden*. Probably the best film adaptation was *Grapes of Wrath*, a powerful and gut-wrenching depiction directed by John Ford. Steinbeck once wrote for the *San Francisco News* and was a war correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune*. While in Europe he was wounded and suffered Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. He treated himself by writing.

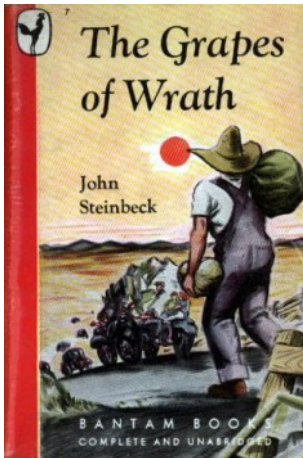
I read two of Steinbeck's books while I was in High School: *The Pearl* and *Travels with Charley*. I was too young to appreciate *The Pearl*, however, *Travels* knocked me for a loop. What a great idea taking a dog and traveling the USA for 10,000 miles to experience the country he was writing about. Looking back on it, I have to admit, Steinbeck's journey happens to be the source of my never-ending urge to travel. When Steinbeck reached the Deep South, I found myself deeply appalled. I had no idea at the time that there was so much prejudice in this country.



The Most Famous Authors of All Time

BY
Michael Raff (continued)

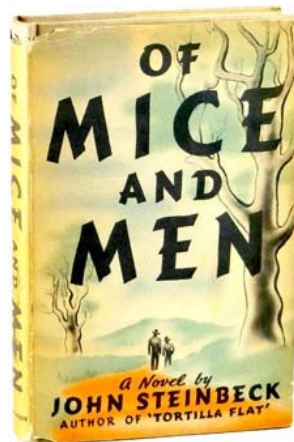
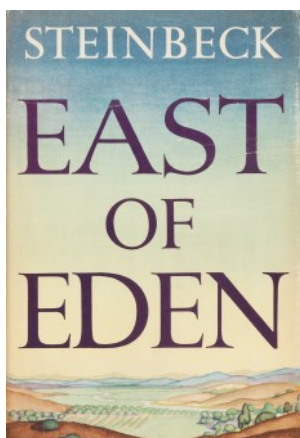
John Steinbeck



I'm almost ashamed to admit I haven't yet read *The Grapes of Wrath*. I've watched the movie version and I highly recommend it. Recently, I read *Of Mice and Men*, and I watched the 1939 film version, (a classic), and also the 1992 version. There has been at least one other movie version and two TV versions. The protagonists, George Milton and Lenny Small, (ironic because he's a huge, powerful man who gets into almost constant

trouble), are migrant workers who dream of owning their own homestead, to be independent, and to be "somebody." Of course, things don't work out as they planned. The novella is written straightforwardly, captures the effect of the Great Depression on rural America, and moves along effortlessly.

Additionally, Steinbeck has had a *huge* impact on my writing. While I was taking Creative Writing in college, my teacher said something amazingly profound, along the lines of: "Steinbeck said that most first-time writers were better writers than him. What made his writing better was he would write endless drafts until he was satisfied." I practice that advice to this very day.



Here are some fun facts on Steinbeck:

His dog, Max, ate one of his early drafts *Of Mice and Men*. (That's what I said about my homework in the 5th grade, but I was sent to the principal's office).

Steinbeck co-wrote Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Lifeboat* but asked that his name not be listed in the credits.

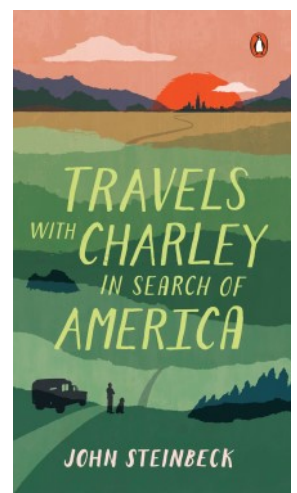
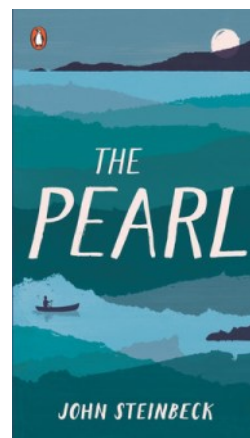
He was the on-screen narrator in the film, *O. Henry's Full House*.

His novella, *The Pearl*, was based on a story he heard while traveling in La Paz, Mexico.

His restored truck from *Travels with Charley* is on display in the National Steinbeck Center.

Modest about his talents, when asked if he thought he deserved the Noble Prize in Literature, he responded, "Frankly, no."

Farewell until next time, when I choose another famous writer. Meanwhile, as Tom Joad so famously said, "I'll be all around in the dark."





Roger Lubeck

I'm an ordained minister and once pastored a church in Bellflower. A member of the church asked me if I'd be willing to do a funeral for a friend of theirs who had died of an overdose. I agreed.

After preparing the message, I showed up at the mortuary to a full-on shouting match. The young widow and her friends were yelling at her husband's parents who were wagging their fingers and yelling back. Seems the wife wanted to have her husband cremated while the parents wanted their son buried. The head of the mortuary came to me exasperated and pled, "Please do something! This has never happened before!" All I could think of was: *This is the group I have to speak to? Really?*

At our Act II meeting on May 25th, Roger Lubeck, Vice President of the California Writers Club, shared with us how to do a professional presentation. He focused on the topics, venues, techniques, the talk, and Q and A.

Topics: Dr. Lubeck walked us through choosing a topic to speak on. The key—speak on something we are passionate about, something we are well versed in, a topic we have some practical experience in.

Venues: Roger then explained to us the importance of knowing the venue we're speaking in. Each place has its own structure, each will enhance or hamper our ability to connect with our audience. He recommended showing up early and getting a feel for the room.

Techniques: This is how we do the presentation itself. We are to be confident, relaxed, joyous and friendly, know where to start and move around the room, give a talk—don't read, read the body language of the listeners, and modulate our voice. Don't let the audience see us do something we can't do well.

The Talk: The talk itself entails an opening, the core message, audience participation, and the closing. Roger recommended starting with a story, one that is relevant to the topic. This is why I started this article with my mortuary story. The message itself must be kept as simple as possible. People can't hold on to ten points. Stay with three to seven things you really want to say. Audience participation may entail a quick survey or an exercise.

Closing: It's helpful to use the closing to tie up your presentation. Bring the audience back to the beginning. Give them closure. Touch their emotions, if possible.



At that funeral home I brought the families into the sanctuary for the service. In a casket lay the man they all loved—even though they didn't like each other very much. I took a deep breath and in a stern voice told them, "Before I will begin, I want a commitment from all of you that you will show this young man the respect all men are due at their final passing. You will not interrupt me or show any disrespect to anyone while I am speaking." They all sheepishly agreed and I went on to give this man the most honorable service I could.

On my way out, the parents of the deceased stopped me and apologized for their behavior and said they would honor the wife's wishes.

Dr. Lubeck was right, we have to meet our audience with a message they need and give them something they can take away.

Mike Apodaca



Poetry



Dear Poet,

The Poemsmith critique group of the High Desert California Writers Club is putting together an anthology of poems: *From Silence to Speech: Women of the Bible Speak Out*.

There are about 250 named women in the Bible. Poems can be about a woman or from the voice of the woman (Persona poems). We ask that each be no more than one page in length and that you put the text of what is considered the traditional Bible, Old or New Testament, any version, under the title in case someone wants to read more about your subject. We also ask that your poem be based on facts in the Bible or be plausible if you're writing about a woman's feelings. For example, Job's wife was exasperated with Job ("Curse God and die!") so she might have had more negative thoughts.

Your poem can be serious, funny, light or dark, in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person. It can be any style—free verse or traditional (haiku, sonnet,

abecedarian, ekphrastic—lots of Bible women are portrayed in art—villanelle, even erasure or prose poem). We already have about 20 poems written by The Poemsmiths. We have more than one on Miriam, which is okay because they are very different.

So find a woman who intrigues you or fascinates you and write us a poem!

Send 3-5 poems only in Times New Roman 12 (Previously published okay)

Title of Poem, "by" and your name, text reference (Ex: Genesis 18:9-15) send by attachment (Microsoft Word Doc) to:

mh_thompson@hotmail.com

Judges will be Poemsmiths

Submission deadline: June 30, 2021

Although you can write on any woman (or group of women), we need poems on the following women (don't forget unnamed women):

Bathsheba
Abigail
Delilah (and also the mother of Samson)
Deborah, the judge
Mary (Jesus' mother and John's mother)
Naomi (and the daughter-in-law who did not follow her)
Esther
Zipporah (wife of Moses)
Hannah (mother of Samuel)
Lydia, Apphia, Aquila, Prisca, Phoebe, (women who prophesized and taught for Paul)
Tabitha (Dorcas)
Lot's wife and Lot's daughters

Poemsmith Linda Boruff suggests this website: womeninthebible.net

We look forward to seeing your work.

The Poemsmiths

Poetry

Diner's Lament

By Bob Isbill

"You're welcome," is what servers once said.
When thanked by thrilled diners well-fed
Though enjoying the food
They consider it rude
To get a "No problem," instead



Haiku

By Lorelei Kay

Bringing in the Mail

Insurance brochure
bids me sign before offer,
or I, expire!



LIFE IS YOU

By Sara Metcalf Leach

May 2, 2021

Arms linked in deep water

I am with thee.

The burden I did not see

That I cast your way

As if your day

Was only for me.

When lost at sea

I reach for the one

Who is already there

And always will be.

No other do I trust

Whose words are as mine

And speak for me always

As I hurl through time.

You ride the rough roads

Everywhere I go —

So I now stop to say

I love you so.

With thee I shall ride

If I may. Life is you.

Events Ahead > Book Fairs & more

JUNE — JULY. ACTIVITIES

June 12 HDCWC meeting with Maggie Downs on creating memoirs. Nominations for HDCWC officers.

June 10 Poemsmiths meeting.

June 22 Act II meeting with our own Bob Isbill. Bob is passionate about getting our writers ready to do presentations. Don't miss this!

June 24 Poemsmiths meeting.

July 8 Poemsmiths meeting.

July 22 Poemsmiths meeting

If you have a special group meeting regularly and would like to open it up to the membership, please contact Mike Apodaca (mrdaca.ma@gmail.com) to have your group included in the calendar.
mrdaca.ma@gmail.com

In-Person Meetings

The news continues to be good on the COVID-19 front. Cases are falling, as are hospitalizations and deaths.

The HDCWC Board is discussing when we'll be able to have our first club meeting in person. Dwight Norris has been in touch with The Community Church at Jess Ranch, and they want to have us back when we are ready.

The Board will be following CDC and county guidelines. Our primary concern will be the safety of our members.

It is time to renew your membership. Don't miss out on all the CWC has to offer. Go to www.hdcwc.com and renew now!

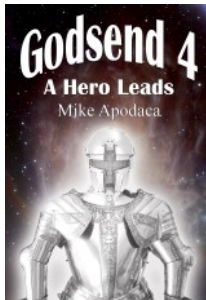
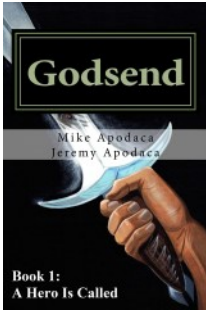


Order extra copies of our HDCWC anthologies for your bookshelf, your gifts, as a Senior Center donation.

Titles can be found on Amazon.com
Pre-orders can be delivered at our regular meetings.

Some of Our Writers

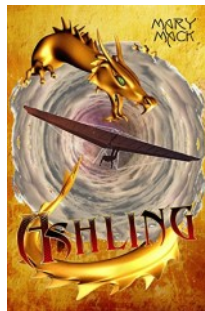
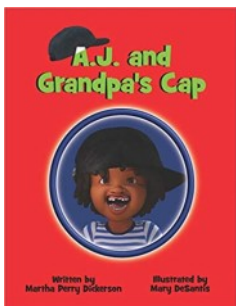
Mike Apodaca



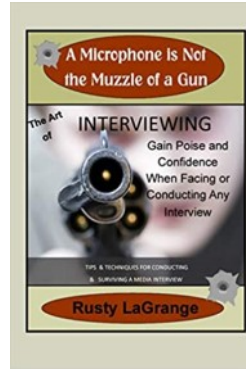
Perrin Pring



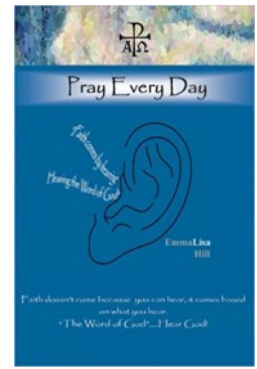
Mary Mack



Rusty LaGrange



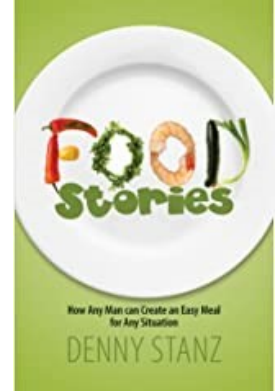
Emma Hill



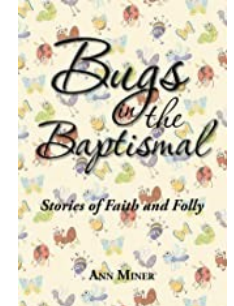
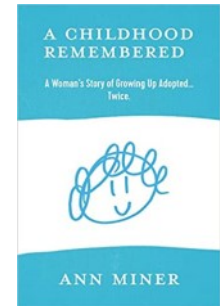
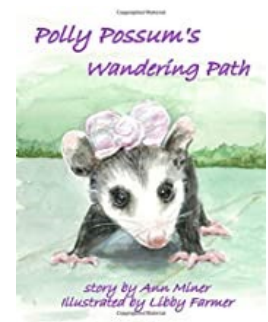
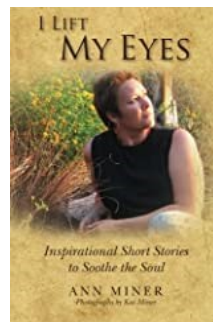
Elizabeth Pye



Denny Stanz



Ann Miner



MEMBER SERVICES



Dorothy C. Blakely
Memoir Project



The DCB Memoir Project is alive and well. A committee is meeting to determine how the project proceeds.

Take advantage of your membership benefits

Free advertising & free posting of
your book titles, your latest project,
your free PR author's webpage
& other free & fantastic benefits!!

Because you belong to
CWC High Desert chapter.

Contact a board member,
our Webmaster, Roberta Smith,
or review your Benefits Booklet
online: www.HDCWC.com

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Here's the link to the channel:
[https:// www.youtube.com/channel/
UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC28XLtEK5oBNq5gW2Zy1ssg)

Managed by Joan Rudder-Ward

**Do you provide a service that could benefit
other writers?**

**Send a JPEG file of your business card or ad to
mrda.ca.ma@gmail.com
We'll advertise it free of charge!**

Temporary Editor



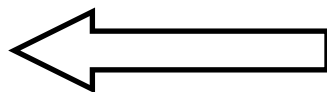
Mike Apodaca

Notes From the Editor

EDITOR'S MUSINGS...

Why *temporary* Editor?

I volunteered to edit the *Inkslinger* until we could find another editor, someone who wants to get more involved and have their finger on the pulse of our club. This is your moment to step up and make a difference. I'll help you get started and support you along the way. Let me know (mrda.ca.ma@gmail.com).



Your Picture Here

Submitting to *The Inkslinger* is easy. Use Microsoft Word, single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, please. The email address for submissions is Mrda.ca.ma@gmail.com. Articles and stories between 300 to 700 words are accepted. Photos, poetry, and drawings are always welcome. Please avoid sending items that were embedded in other media. Call me to discuss an article or idea, 760-985-7107.

Submit July items by June. 23
Submit August items by July. 23